

CLAIMS:

1. A goods/services requisition and supply system, comprising a computer system, ordering means for generating an order for a goods/services item in response to operation of the computer system by a user, and a vending device connected to the computer system and including storage means for storing goods, the vending device being arranged to be responsive to the ordering means generating an order for an item available in the storage means to provide the item to the user.

2. A system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the ordering means is arranged to determine whether an ordered item is available in the storage means or is available from a remote supply location, and if the item is only available from the remote supply location is arranged to generate an order for transmission to a remote supplier.

3. A system in accordance with claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the ordering means is arranged to monitor stock levels of items in the vending device and a remote supplier can ascertain the stock level from the ordering means, whereby to enable the supplier to maintain the stock of the vending device.

4. A system in accordance with any one of claims 1, 2 or 3, wherein the ordering means is resident on the computer system and the vending device operates as a peripheral controlled by the computer system.

5. A system in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the computer system is a proprietary computer system, such as LAN, Intranet or Enterprise system.

6. A system in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the vending device is arranged to receive articles for recycling and the ordering means is arranged to track items being placed in the vending device for recycling and advise the remote supplier.

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7. A system in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system includes means for enabling remote payment for items ordered by a user.

8. A system in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the vending device includes sensor means arranged to sense when an item is dispensed.

9. A system in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the vending device is arranged to dispense the item on receipt of an identification means from the user.

10. A system in accordance with claim 9, wherein the ordering means, on an item being ordered by the user, is arranged to provide an identification code to the user, which code is entered by the user at the vending device to obtain the item.

11. A system in accordance with claim 10, wherein the ordering means is also arranged to provide the identification code to a supplier responsible for providing the vended item, wherein the identification code can be used in an audit trail for the supplied goods/services.

12. A system in accordance with any one of claims 7 to 11, wherein the vending device includes a key pad arranged to operate in a secure mode for entering data required for remote payment and in a non-secure mode for entry of other data.

13. A vending device including means for storing items for vending, and control means enabling remote control of the vending device from a remote location.

14. A vending device in accordance with claim 13, wherein the control means enables remote control of a vending operation and allows control of dispensing of items to be directed from a remote location.

15. A vending device in accordance with claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the control means is arranged to communicate with a remote location in response to an

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operator requiring access to the vending device, for a vending function, to ask permission from the remote location for access.

16. A computer system, including ordering means
5 for generating an order for a goods/services item in response to operation of the computer system, the ordering means including means for determining whether a local vending device stores a goods/services item and, in response to the determination generating an order for the
10 item to be dispensed from the local vending device.

17. A computer system in accordance with claim 16, wherein if the ordering means determines that the item is not available at the local vending device, it is arranged to generate an order for the item to be provided
15 from a remote supplier.

18. A computer system in accordance with claim 16 or claim 17, wherein the ordering means includes means for controlling the operation of the vending device as a peripheral of the computer system.

19. A computer readable memory storing
20 instructions for controlling a computer system to generate an order for a goods/services item in response to operation of the computer system by a user, and for controlling a vending device connected to the computer system to provide
25 the item to the user.

20. A computer readable memory storing instructions for controlling a computer system to provide an ordering means for generating an order for a goods/services item in response to operation of the
30 computer system, the ordering means including means for determining whether a local vending device stores goods/services items and, in response to the determination, generating an order for the item to be dispensed from the local vending device.

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21. A vending device in accordance with any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein the control means enables operation of the vending device as a peripheral of a computer system.

5 22. A method of providing goods/services items to a person, comprising the steps of providing items on site stored in a local vending device which is arranged to be accessed by a computer system of the person to control vending of goods to the person.

10 23. A method in accordance with claim 22, comprising the further step of a supplier, not being the person, maintaining the vending device.

24. A goods/services requisition and supply system, comprising a computer system, ordering means for
15 generating an order for a goods/services item in response to operation of the computer system by a user, and a vending device connected to a network that allows the computer system to communicate with the vending device, the vending device including a storage means for storing goods,
20 and input means enabling the vending device to determine that a user of the vending device is approved to collect goods.

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